

Remarks

Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful consideration of this application.

Reconsideration of this application is now respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the following remarks.

Claims 1-14, 26-33, 35, 36, and 38-41 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1, 26, 35, and 38 being the independent claims. Claims 25, 34, and 37 have been cancelled without prejudice to pursue their subject matter subsequently. Claims 26-33, 35, and 36 have been amended, and new Claims 40 and 41 have been added, which find support at least in the claims as originally filed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 1-14 and the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 26, 28, 29, 32, 35, and 38 at Page 4 of the Office Action.

At Pages 2-3, the Office Action rejects Claims 25, 27, 31, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sankaranarayanan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,471,419). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and respectfully submit that they are now moot based on the above amendments.

While Applicants disagree with the characterizations of the rejected claims and of the prior art reference used in the rejections of Claims 25, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 39, for the sake of expedience, they have opted to amend Claim 26, indicated as containing allowable subject matter, to include the limitations of Claim 25; to amend Claim 35, also indicated as

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containing allowable subject matter, to include the limitations of Claim 34; and to amend Claim 38, also indicated as containing allowable subject matter, to include the limitations of Claim 37. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 26, 35, and 38 are now allowable. Claims 25, 34, and 37 have now been cancelled, rendering their rejections moot. Additionally, Claims 27-33, 36, and 39 have been amended to depend from allowable Claims 26, 35, and 38, respectively, and are thus allowable.

Applicants have also added new Claims 40 and 41, which depend from allowable Claims 38 and 35, respectfully, and which, for at least that reason, are also allowable.

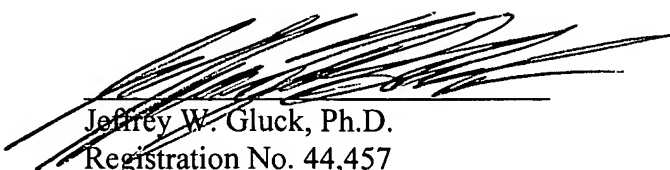
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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